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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 002204

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [AEMR](#) [AMGT](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [CVIS](#) [EFIN](#) [ETRD](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: TFI201: AMMAN SITREP 33 (4/10 1845 LOCAL)

REF: (A) FBIS GMP20030409000226

Classified By: DCM Gregory L. Berry for reasons 1.5 (B)(D).

General Overview

[11.](#) (C) Most Jordanians are still sorting through the complex emotions unleashed by the events of the past 24 hours in Baghdad and elsewhere in Iraq. Many appear in a state of shock that Saddam's rule collapsed so quickly, depressed that "once again the Arabs have lost," and uncomfortable with the sight of American troops occupying a historic Arab capital. Generally, however, they are relieved -- relieved that their worst nightmares about the war's impact on Jordan failed to occur and relieved that the human suffering of Iraqis appears close to an end. Most continue to remain deeply skeptical of U.S. motives and fear that Israel will use these events to its advantage against the Palestinians. It is clear that many are struggling to reconcile their disappointment and shock with the undeniable scenes of joy in Baghdad.

Consular Issues

[12.](#) (U) See para 11 below.

GOJ Actions/Statements

[13.](#) (U) In an April 9 letter addressed to PM Ali Abul Ragheb, King Abdullah directed the GOJ to "take all necessary measures to launch a national campaign to extend humanitarian aid and secure essential medical and food supplies to the Iraqi people." (Jordan Times April 10)

[14.](#) (U) Minister of Information Mohammad al-Adwan stated April 9 that Jordan would not "interfere in the issue of determining the future government of Iraq. The future and destiny of Iraq should be in the hands of its people. Jordan will under no circumstances accept division of Iraq." (Jordan Times, April 10)

[15.](#) (U) Foreign Minister Marwan Muasher, Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Mohammed Batayneh, and Minister of Information Adwan April 9 all categorically denied rumors that Jordanian and Israeli officials will meet to discuss the possibility of restarting an old oil pipeline linking Iraq to the Israeli port of Haifa through Jordan. Adwan stated that "no contacts have been made with anyone regarding such an issue." Batayneh characterized the rumors as "groundless and totally untrue." (Jordan Times April 10). FM Muasher echoed these statements in an April 9 interview on Al-Jazeera and added that "any improvement in relations with Israel is contingent on how the Israeli government is responsive with the Middle East peace efforts." (ref A)

Security

[16.](#) (C) The investigation into the April 8 shooting incident involving an Embassy TDYer continues (septel). This evening two public gatherings in Amman are planned in response to the Jordanian journalist killed in Iraq. As of 1500 local, the PSD has not yet confirmed whether any demonstrations or gatherings are expected for this weekend.

Economic and Trade Developments

[17.](#) (U) No new issues.

Refugee/Humanitarian Issues

[18.](#) (S) The Jordan-Iraq border remains open. CENTCOM sources report that Iraqi officials have abandoned their border posting, leaving the Iraqi side of the Karameh border crossing unstaffed and vacant. One report said the Iraqi border officials reportedly joined the 100-plus car convoy of

journalists headed east on Hwy 10; but in fact that convoy decided to remain near the border overnight. CENTCOM elements indicate that U.S. forces are moving to control the now abandoned Iraqi border checkpoints with Jordan (Karamah) and Syria (near the Syrian town of at-Tanf).

9. (SBU) IOM reports that 11 TCNs crossed the border into Jordan on April 9. No TCNs or Iraqi refugees have crossed into Jordan today. IOM is repatriating 38 Moroccans, 14 Somalis and 3 Iraqis with Egyptian travel documents later today. The total TCN transit camp population hovers around 200, comprised of Somali and Sudanese nationals who do not want to be repatriated, 24 undocumented Palestinians and six Iraqi refugees. The Jordan Red Crescent agreed to house the Iraqi refugees indefinitely, as it would not be cost-effective for UNHCR to open its camp for only six refugees. IOM is in the process of scaling down its TCN transit operations and will leave only 1 international and 8 locally hired employees in Ruwaished.

10. (SBU) UNHCR and IOM hope to convince the Government of Jordan to allow the 24 Palestinians to join relatives in Amman, provided those relatives provide letters of guarantee. They are meeting with the GOJ later this afternoon to discuss the issue.

Press

11. (SBU) A large convoy of journalists, including Amcits, is crossing into Iraq from Jordan today. The convoy, estimated at between 75 and 120 vehicles, was at the border at approximately 1330 local. It was expected to break up into multiple convoys once having crossed into Iraq. Embassy Amman and CENTCOM Public Affairs liaison have continued to urge strongly against travel into what remains an active battle area. We have told all who will listen that there can be no guarantee of security offered by Coalition military forces. The Government of Jordan has come under intense pressure from the journalists to allow passage, and we understand they are processing the group slowly through the border. We have informed CENTCOM of the issue. We do not have a complete list of who is in this group of journalists. According to CBS, Dan Rather is among them. Rather is determined, apparently, to reach Baghdad tonight. Others simply want to get inside Iraq so that they can file datelines from inside Iraqi territory. The Consular Section is prepared to assist any Amcit journalists who may encounter problems and return to Jordan. We will continue to follow this situation closely and will provide updates to the CMS Task Force via e-mail as they become available.

GNEHM